

January 30, 1986

TO: Noncoal File

FROM: D. Wayne Hedberg, Permit Supervisor/Reclamation Hydrologist *DWH*

RE: Onsite Inspection, PRO/015/033, Castle Valley Mining Company, Castle Valley Gypsum Mine, Emery County, Utah

A field trip was taken on January 23, 1986 by Division field representatives Wayne Hedberg, David Wham, Kathy Mutz, Jim Leatherwood and Pam Grubaugh-Littig. An onsite inspection was made of the proposed operation located approximately 12 miles east-northeast of the town of Castledale, Utah. The owner of the properties is Mr. A. J. Cornell. He was not available at the time to accompany us onsite.

Current surface disturbing activities consisted of a series of scattered shallow surface excavations. All disturbances seem to be within the two acre exemption status. The excavations for the most part were trenches and associated Cat blading work where the gypsum deposits had been dozed into small piles which could then be readily sampled. The area of the proposed gypsum mining operation is in a very arid environment with salt desert shrub vegetation. Several rare plants are known from the vicinity but none were located both because of the season and snow cover.

The general area has a few ephemeral drainages which pass through this site in various locations. The depth to the gypsum deposit is very shallow. The surface overburden and supporting plant growth material may average from 0 to 12 inches in depth. The gypsum formation is the soil parent material on the outcrop areas. Soils in the surrounding environment are of a sandstone origin. One distinguishing feature of the site was the presence of a cryptogamic surface crust and well developed lichen on the soils. This was very common over a major portion of the proposed mine site area.

Surface drainage and erosional problems should not be of significant concern given the nature of the terrain, rainfall patterns and soil conditions in the area. Limited sources of surface water for processing purposes could come from a small livestock watering impoundment located to the northeast of the mine site, approximately 1/4 to 1/2 mile distant. However, it is rather questionable whether this impoundment will retain sufficient water to sustain the proposed mining and milling operations.

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All the proposed site facilities are located on federal BLM lands. Mineral ownership is also controlled by the BLM. The location of the proposed processing facilities will be near the mine. There are no major engineering concerns except for the reclamation of roads. The road reclamation responsibility will need to be defined.

btb
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